

# **An Overview of Transit Oriented Development (TOD)\***

Presentation to the  
Capitol / Downtown Central Corridor Taskforce

City of Saint Paul Department of Planning and  
Economic Development (PED)

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\*The Information in this presentation was extracted from presentations created by the Center for Transit-Oriented Development and the book "The New Transit Town: Best Practices in Transit-Oriented Development."

# National Trends

- ❑ Consumers are choosing smaller, more compact housing
- ❑ Housing market is changing
- ❑ Regions are building more transit
- ❑ Employers are looking for regions with culture and urbanity



Excelsior and Grand ~St. Louis Park, MN  
Photo Courtesy of City of Eagan

# What is TOD?

- Pattern of land development designed to support public transit services.
- From a transportation perspective, TOD is the land use and economic development version of transportation demand management (TDM).
- The purposes of TOD and TDM are similar, to reduce the use of single occupant vehicles (SOV) by increasing the accessibility and number of trips by walking, bicycle, car/van pool, bus, street car, ferry or rail.



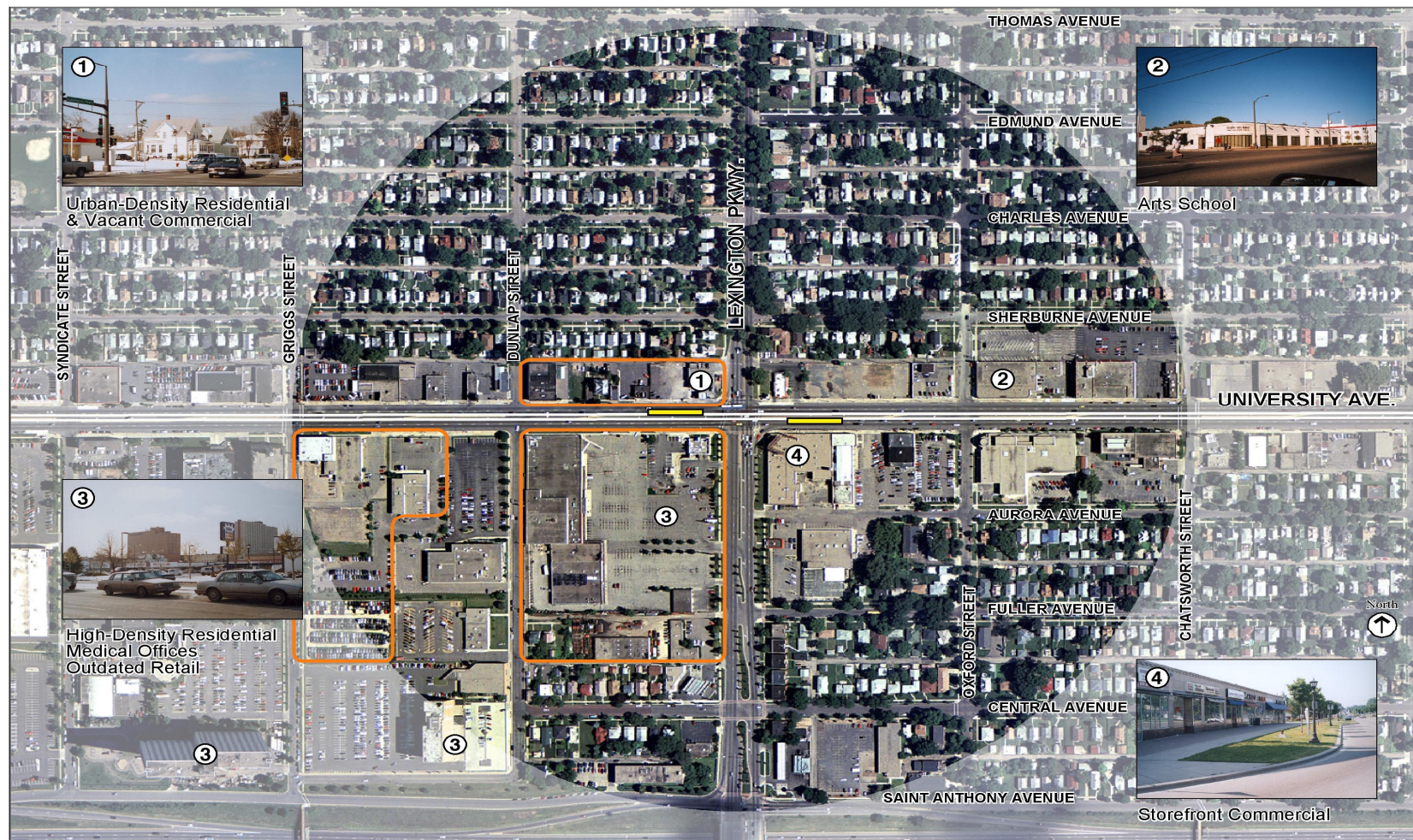
Street Cars on University Avenue Photo Courtesy of Minnesota History Center

# Characteristics of TOD

- Development within ½ mile of transit stop
- Linked to a network of walkable, bikeable streets and transportation system
- Contains a rich mix of uses: retail, housing and jobs
- Buildings and uses cater to the pedestrian
- Streets have a high level of connectivity
- Has appropriate treatment of parking
- Has densities appropriate to its setting
- High Quality Design



# TOD is a District, Not a Site



# Why a District Approach?

- Creates Greater Critical Mass
- Allows Different Sites to Provide Different Functions
- Responds More Effectively to the Market
- District Connectivity can Reduce Auto Dependency and Expands Transit Ridership

# Benefits of TOD

## □ **Environmental**

- Utilizes existing infrastructure so new resources do not need to be used
- Provides alternative options to driving such as walking and biking
- Helps to reduce traffic congestion and air pollution
- Preserve open space by concentrating development in existing areas

## □ **Economic**

- Households spend less on transportation when there are a variety of low-cost alternatives
- Property located near transit stations have higher property values
- Vibrant communities that include pedestrians increase customers for area businesses
- Town centers, both in urban and suburban areas, can be revitalized through transit-oriented development.

## □ **Social**

- Higher quality of life for existing communities.
- Possible reduction in car accidents and injuries
- Those who are unable to drive (i.e. elderly and the young) have access to shops, restaurants and public spaces
- An increase in walking and biking leads to healthier lifestyles



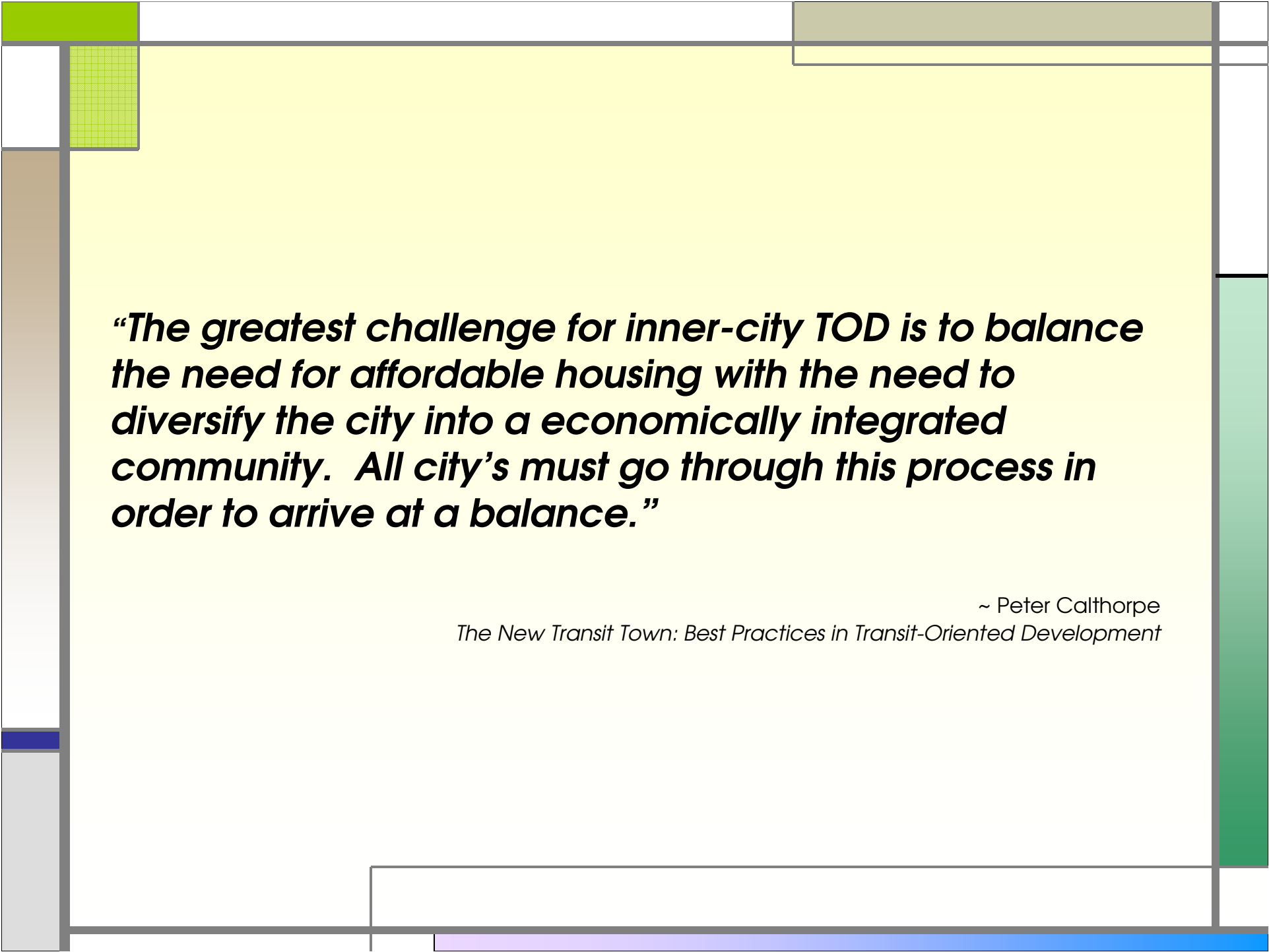
# Challenges to TOD

- No Common Definition or Agreement on Goals and Outcomes
- Tension between Place-Making and Transit System Needs
- Uncertainty (i.e. Mismatch between potential demand for TOD and supply)
- Transit alone does not Drive Real Estate Investments
- Most Local Planning, parking and traffic standards contradict TOD's goals of pedestrian-friendly design
- Financing (i.e. Most Banks are structured to fund isolated single-use developments)



Photo Courtesy of  
[www.transitorienteddevelopment.org/](http://www.transitorienteddevelopment.org/)





***“The greatest challenge for inner-city TOD is to balance the need for affordable housing with the need to diversify the city into a economically integrated community. All city’s must go through this process in order to arrive at a balance.”***

~ Peter Calthorpe

*The New Transit Town: Best Practices in Transit-Oriented Development*

# Challenges for Low Income Households in TOD Districts

- ❑ Already being pushed to neighborhoods with low quality housing stock
- ❑ Renters may be pushed out of transit districts as absentee owners sell and areas become attractive
- ❑ TOD housing market is strong enough that developers don't need to build full income diversity
- ❑ Very low income renters are most at risk, as they are the most difficult to provide housing for and they are more likely to be transit dependent

# CTOD's Affordability Index

- Affordability is about housing cost and other costs and other costs of living associated with housing unit location, especially transportation costs
- Due to development patterns and lack of transportation choice:
  - Transportation is the 2<sup>nd</sup> highest expenditure after housing
  - For working families, housing and transportation consume >50% of household budgets



The Metropolitan Place project in downtown Renton is an example of TOD. Located next to the Renton Transit Center, it has park-and-ride stalls as well as apartments and resident parking.

# CTOD's Affordability Index

- Models transportation costs by neighborhood
- The Housing + Transportation (H+T) Affordability Index adds known housing costs to modeled transportation costs to identify the percent of income that households spend on "H+T":
  - $$\text{Affordability} = \frac{H + T}{\text{Income}}$$

# TOD and the Downtown

- CTOD estimates that TOD demand will grow to almost ½ million by 2030 in the Twin Cities
- TOD embraces the fact that there is no one best system (i.e. LRT, BRT, streetcars, walking etc.)
- The goal for downtown should be to create a pedestrian-oriented area that contains a lively mix of uses within walking distance of each other
  - Residential
  - Office
  - Retail
  - Entertainment
  - Civic



Photograph showing the transit station area for Downtown Plaza-St. Rose of Lima Park Station . Photo Courtesy of Sacramento Transit District



# Techniques for Implementing TOD Districts

- ❑ Count Housing + Transportation Cost
- ❑ Direct Low Income Housing Tax Credits to TOD
- ❑ Station Area Planning
- ❑ Framework Plans
- ❑ Reduce Parking Requirements
- ❑ Parking Management Tools
- ❑ Form-Base Zoning Codes
- ❑ Increase Densities (i.e. specify minimum rather than maximum)

# Incentives for Implementing TOD Districts

- Relaxed on-site Parking Standards
- Park Once Programs
- Density Bonuses (i.e. for affordable housing)
- Public Funding for Place-Making Amenities
- Land Assembly (Public + Private)
- Creative Placement of Commuter Parking

# Partnerships are Key to TOD

- **Transit Agencies** - TOD supportive alignments, strategic parking locations, etc.
- **Cities** - Comp Plans, zoning, design goals, etc.
- **Developers** - Ready accept market and its changing dynamics
- **Business Owners** – Buy in
- **Communities** – Have a clear Vision of what it wants
- **Lenders** – Creating products that support TOD
- **Regional Agencies** – Regional Vision, data, etc.

# What Does it Take to Do Good TOD?

- ❑ Define Goals Upfront
- ❑ Design for Pedestrians and Users
- ❑ Get the Planning Right
- ❑ Let the Market Lead
- ❑ Partnerships
- ❑ Leadership



Photo Courtesy of [www.baltimoreregiontransitplan.com](http://www.baltimoreregiontransitplan.com)

# More Information

- ❑ [www.stpaul.gov/centralcorridor](http://www.stpaul.gov/centralcorridor)
- ❑ [www.centralcorridor.org](http://www.centralcorridor.org)
- ❑ <http://www.todadvocate.com/>
- ❑ [www.reconnectingamerica.com](http://www.reconnectingamerica.com)



The Fruitvale BART Transit Village in Oakland Photo Courtesy of California Metropolitan Transportation Commission